



## **Warden Notice: Guidance about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome for Americans Living Abroad**

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHS, has received reports of outbreaks of a respiratory illness, being referred to as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS. The number of cases of SARS is subject to change as surveillance increases and cases are identified and confirmed. The most current case count for the U.S. can be found at this website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/sars.htm>. Updated case counts and affected countries are available on the website of the World Health Organization (WHO) at: <http://www.who.int/csr/sarscountry/en/>. Cases appear to primarily involve health-care workers caring for patients with SARS and close family contacts. CDC is working closely with WHO and country partners in efforts to define the etiology of this infection, track patterns of its transmission, and determine effective strategies for its control and prevention. At present, a CDC travel advisory recommends that people with elective or nonessential travel to Hong Kong and Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China, and Hanoi, Vietnam, consider postponing such travel. Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/> and <http://www.who.int>.

Health authorities are on the alert for people with specific symptoms of respiratory illness. The case definition for suspected SARS is subject to change, particularly with regard to travel history, as illness is reported in other geographic areas. The most current definition can be accessed at the SARS case definition web page:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/casedefinition.htm>.

Currently, prevention of new cases is based on following appropriate infection control measures when coming in close contact with cases of SARS. Such close contact includes direct care of case patients, or direct contact with respiratory secretions and body fluids of case patients. For information on infection control measures, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/infectioncontrol.htm>.

Embassies should recommend to U.S. expatriates that they avoid situations in which they could be exposed to patients with SARS. In addition, on March 23 the U.S. Department of State authorized the voluntary departure of family members at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. Because of health concerns in Vietnam about SARS, the current capacity of health-care facilities to accept and manage SARS cases, and the lack of readily accessible medical evacuation services, the Department of State warns U.S. citizens, particularly those traveling with children, to defer nonemergency travel to Vietnam at this time. The full text of this announcement is available at [http://travel.state.gov/vietnam\\_warning.html](http://travel.state.gov/vietnam_warning.html).

U.S. citizens, including those working for U.S. medical nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), with elective activities planned in inpatient health-care settings in regions where cases have been found are recommended to postpone such activities to avoid exposure to their patients, to other health-care workers and to themselves. For additional information for health-care providers and consular officials, see [http://travel.state.gov/s\\_syndrome\\_factsheet.html](http://travel.state.gov/s_syndrome_factsheet.html).



At present, there is no evidence to suggest that infection is spread in assemblies of large numbers of people (e.g., schools, churches, or other non-health-care settings). If new information suggests otherwise, notice will be provided.

If a person becomes ill with fever, respiratory symptoms, or other symptoms consistent with SARS, following travel to an affected region or close contact with a SARS case, local health authorities should be notified.

In light of the evolving nature of this situation, CDC and WHO websites should be consulted regularly for updates.